

DIODORUS

Greek historian, 1st century BCE

Excerpts from his writings "World History," Translated by M.M. Austen

The Destruction of Persepolis

As for Persepolis, the capital of the Persian kingdom, Alexander described it to the Macedonians as their worst enemy among the cities of Asia, and he gave it over to the soldiers to plunder, with the exception of the royal palace.

It was the wealthiest city under the sun and the private houses had been filled for a long time with riches of every kind. The Macedonians rushed into it, killing all the men and plundering the houses, which were numerous and full of furniture and precious objects of every kind. Here much silver was carried off and no little gold, and many expensive dresses, embroidered with purple or with gold, fell as prizes to the victors.

But the great royal palace, famed throughout the inhabited world, had been condemned to ... total destruction. The Macedonians spent the whole day in pillage but still could not satisfy their inexhaustible greed. [...] As for the women, they dragged them away forcibly with their jewels, treating as slaves the whole group of captives. As Persepolis had surpassed all other cities in prosperity, so she now exceeded them in misfortune.

Alexander went up to the citadel and took possession of the treasures stored there. They were full of gold and silver, with the accumulation of revenue from Cyrus, the first king of the Persians, down to that time... Alexander wanted to take part of the money with him, for the expenses of war and to deposit the rest at Susa under close guard. From Babylon, Mesopotamia and Susa, he sent for a crowd of mules, ... as well as 3,000 pack camels, and with these he had all the treasure conveyed to the chosen places. He was very hostile to the local people and did not trust them, and wished to destroy Persepolis utterly...

DIODORUS (continued)

The Olympic Games of 324 BCE

Not long before his death Alexander decided to bring back all the exiles in the Greek cities, partly to increase his own glory and partly to have in each city many personal supporters to counteract the risk of revolution and revolt among the Greeks. ... Consequently, as the celebration of the Olympic Games [approached] he [sent] Nicanor of Stagira to Greece with a letter...; his instructions were to have it read out loud to the assembled crowds. Nicanor carried out the order, and ... read out the following letter.

'King Alexander to the exiles from the Greek cities. We were not the cause of your exile, but we shall be responsible for bringing about your return to your native cities, ...'

This proclamation was greeted with loud approval by the crowds; ...those at the [Olympic games] joyfully welcomed the king's favor and repaid his generosity with shouts of praise. All the exiles had gathered together at the [Olympic games], being more than 20,000 in number. The majority of Greeks welcomed the return of the exiles as a good thing.